

## THE SOCIAL CODE

BY THE ARBITER.

From now on there will be a series of house parties. East, West, North and South, every one with a country place will invite and expect guests, and it is well to review the etiquette for these occasions, which is simple enough, but so often outraged by lack of knowledge or appreciation. In America we have come to follow the English custom of inviting guests for a specified time, the invitations generally conveying the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Smith will be delighted to receive Mr. and Mrs. Jones from the lat of May at luncheon until the 30th of May at dinner, with the further instructions that an automobile or trap will wait the guests at the train.

An hour should not be allowed to elapse before this invitation is answered, and on no account should there be a deviation of a single moment from the hours set. Such an exhibition of bad form should preclude any one again being invited to the same house. As in England, at the smartest houses the guests are supposed to take care of themselves from breakfast until luncheon. Breakfast is a careless meal, at which the hostess never appears, and at which the guests pick up from the side table, the maid or butler bringing in installments of coffee or tea. After this informal meal there is the mail to look over, the papers to review, and at the door there are traps and saddle horses, the tennis court, the golf links, and other things to engage the attention of the visitors until the formal luncheon at 1 o'clock, which is not very formal after all, since we have more or less come to follow the English habit of waiting upon ourselves at this meal.

After luncheon there is the siesta, the tete-a-tete for those so inclined, rides in the country, the hammock, and an agreeable novel, in fact, numerous ways in which to pass the time until afternoon tea brings all the household together. This brings the time of the day to dinner, which is really the gala occasion, when the women are all supposed to appear in decollete, the men in evening clothes, not tuxedos, as dinner jackets are vulgarly called. At a country house party women should carry the very smartest toilettes in their wardrobes, and should spare no pains to make themselves as beautiful and brilliant as possible, because at a country estate, far from the madding crowd, every guest must do his or her utmost to make the party a success. Do not for an instant think that you are invited for yourself alone. Every one who joins a house party must do everything in his or her power to contribute to keep the ball rolling and make things merry.

Not long ago at a celebrated house in the South, one of the bright New York women observed a lackadaisical Englishman, who seemed to do nothing but keep a pipe going and dispose of innumerable highballs, asking one of her fellow-guests why he was there. She was told to wait and see. There was no doubt of his usefulness after a week's experience. He was a real major-domo for picnics and automobile parties. He had every possible menu for al fresco entertainment at his finger's end, and he always managed to introduce some element that made the entertainment unique and interesting. He is, to be sure, the youngest son of an impetuous earl, but it is safe to affirm that his talents will ultimately win him an American heiress.

Every one who visits a country house must bear in mind one thing—give as much pleasure and to give as little trouble as possible. For instance, as to the matter of luggage, a guest should take care of it as far as possible, and see that the hostess is not burdened with its delay, which so often happens in the mountain districts that have become so popular with the fashionable. As to the matter of carrying the mail, that depends entirely upon the circumstances of the house. In Europe a little baroness with \$800 a year would never think of visiting a country house without a maid, because she is perfectly helpless, having been brought up to depend entirely upon servants. But in America it is quite different. A woman may spend \$10,000 on her toilet and yet set on her own buttons and her boots. The foreign custom is much the simplest and the most agreeable, and it would be well if it were more generally accepted here.

As to "the bread and butter," that must be written immediately upon the return of a guest to her home. Nothing can excuse this omission. If one has the means and the way of sending a bunch of flowers, a timely book, an interesting magazine to remind the hostess of her appreciation, it is well. But in visiting country houses, as accepting every invitation to the quid pro quo must never be forgotten.

1. Question: I am about to send out some invitations for a small dinner to two of my friends and the entertainment of two of my friends who will come home with her from college. Our house is very limited in space, and we must count carefully on the number of guests to expect. In one of your past articles you said it was not necessary to append R. S. V. P. to invitations, as all those who had the slightest knowledge of the world would answer promptly without any such hint. Now I most certainly do not want to commit a social error, but I must know how many to expect at the little dinner I am giving. Kindly give me your opinion in the matter and help out a troubled mother.

Answer: By all means put on your invitations R. S. V. P., or, if you prefer, as I do, the English form, "An answer is requested." As I have said frequently in this column, there are no hard and fast rules that govern society. "To arrive" is the main point—the only point—and one should leave no stone unturned to make this possible. Moreover, there are many people, good sort, too, with little knowledge of social ethics, who must be taught by the people who entertain them.

2. Question: Is it general for the friends of a girl to send her presents when she becomes engaged? I know it is customary in the North, but I am entirely unacquainted with social usages in this part of the country.

Answer: No, it is not customary, although between intimate friends it is often done.

3. Question: Is it necessary to have a chaplain for a half dozen people who wish to visit Mount Vernon? I am from the "wild and woolly," and it seems to me a stupid thing to ask an old lady to go along with three or four girls who have perhaps just as good, if not better, manners than she has herself, let the people whom I am going to ask be my guests belong to what you call the smart set, and I should be most unhappy to make a mistake.

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ways arise when she comes into the room; run and get a shawl for her, a stool, her knitting, the paper, or a book, anything that she seems to want, without appearing too ardent to serve her. It would give the measure to the hostess to treat the guests in the manners of foreign young girls toward their elders, but I have not the time or the space. Treat your friends' mother exactly as you would like to have your mother treated or would like to be treated yourself if you were the same age. When you return home, if an opportunity arises when you could send her flowers, a new book that you have read with appreciation, or some little gift of your own manufacture, be sure that it will be appreciated.

1. Question: If I go to a house for "pot luck" for luncheon on Sunday, must I fold up my napkin on leaving the table?—Ignorant.

Answer: No.

2. Question: Please answer, if a young countryman in town for the Easter holidays could send with impunity to a young woman whom he has recently met, and toward whom he has the most honorable intentions, some flowers?—Hayseed.

Answer: "Honorable intentions" is rather nerve-racking. "Hayseed" would be perfectly warranted in sending to his new friend a suitable offering of flowers on Easter Sunday.

3. Question: I passed last month in Cuba, and was the guest of a married couple whose wife makes her headquarters in Washington and was absent during my visit. I feel indebted to him for his hospitality, but I should like to go back to him to call upon him, introducing myself, and explaining the reason for my visit.—Wanderer.

Answer: This is a matter of taste, but to the Arbitrator it would seem a wise thing to call upon the wife of the officer to whom you are indebted for hospitality and to include them both in your invitation.

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Organ prelude, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," from "Messiah," Handel; "This Is the Day Which the Lord Hath Made," Lanning; "If Ye Believe That Jesus Died for Sinners," R. S. V. P. to invitations, as all those who had the slightest knowledge of the world would answer promptly without any such hint. Now I most certainly do not want to commit a social error, but I must know how many to expect at the little dinner I am giving. Kindly give me your opinion in the matter and help out a troubled mother.

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## DR. FERNALD ON SCOTT.

Dr. James C. Fernald is continuing his admirable instructive lectures on English literature, of which lectures two series are given, one on Wednesday night and the other on Thursday afternoon at 4:45 o'clock. The lectures are well attended, as they deserve to be.

The lecture of this week was devoted to a consideration of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. Of the former Dr. Fernald said:

"It seems like a fairy tale that 'Waverley' was written in four weeks, 'Guy Rannering' in six weeks, 'The Antiquary,' 'The Black Dwarf,' and 'Old Mortality,' all written in one year, besides other important labors. Still more amazing is it that after his health began to fail in 1817, his writing went on without check. In that year he completed 'Rob Roy,' and within six months 'The Heart of Midlothian,' which is generally esteemed his greatest work. 'The Bride of Lammermoor' was composed in two weeks, being dictated amid suffering so great that often the author could not suppress cries of agony. To this same period belong the thrilling and widely popular prose epic of 'Ivanhoe,' and for the time being, feverish haste, such almost as feverish intensity, the author should be able to keep just proportion of scene and incident, such consistency of character of the various personages in each story; that he should so completely avoid repetitions in the same tale or duplications of parts of one in another; that he should be able to sustain the reader's expectancy, and yet constantly spring crises of action and incident upon him with pleasing or thrilling surprise; that he should have the skill to weave in abundant humor, or even comedy, without losing graviter interest or serious purpose—these things make one who knows anything of the art of composition fairly hold his breath with admiring wonder."

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think and any was what ought to be thought and said, and what true hearts everywhere would sympathize with and approve as they have ever done.

"He was a Tory in politics, and a Cavalier in sympathies, and devoted to the exiled Stuarts, probably because of the poetic and romantic fascination of the old time more than for any other reason. He has been felt to be unfair to the Covenanters and the Puritans, whom he probably did not understand. But he was not unfair as Butler was in 'Hudibras.' He gives those old-time Dissenters the credit, of course, determination, and honesty, though as he believes misguidedly sincerely, but he could not easily forgive them for being so queer, and making the king and the aristocracy so much trouble."

"Or his novels as a class, it must be said that critics find lapses in his syntax and punctuation and improbabilities in his plots. Yet the style is so flowing and charming that we elude unconsciously over its faults till the critic halts and for the time being forgets the faults and brand the error. The things could not but be so. The style is that of a learned and cultured gentleman, writing off as he might talk, with untutored ease, carrying off with him the meaning, effectiveness and pleasingly. Rushing haste gave him no time to revise. The wonder is that the style is so beautiful, often so near perfection. For his plots he cared little as the means of exhibiting his characters and interesting the reader in them—as he never fails to do. One reads with absorbing intensity of interest to the end. It is only after the tale is finished, and the book laid down, when the enchantment is over, and the mind has leisure to turn back with cool reminiscence that the improbabilities are stumbled upon. The same may be said of Shakespeare's plays, where the plots are often the thinnest, and the anachronisms the most stupendous, as when Hector sends out the challenge of a medieval knight-errant during the siege of Troy. But neither the dramatist nor the novelist wrote for the critics. Both captured the human audience for whom they did write. Scott created the historical novel, and in that line of authorship still holds the place of solitary pre-eminence."

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## Value of Uncle Sam's Birds

BY FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

The general ignorance of our people about the birds of the United States has often caused grave disaster among the crops, and has lost to the agricultural element of the country many millions of dollars a year. Whole colonies of birds are wantonly destroyed by boy-hunters, not because they are game birds, but because they offer bright targets for new guns. Millions of others are killed by irate farmers, who are firmly convinced that every time a crow, a blackbird, a hawk, or an owl is slain, that he has done a great service to his poultry-yard and his crops. This alarming ignorance, and unnecessary slaughter of its feathered citizens, led the United States government to make an investigation. Measures were taken to summon each gay or dull-coated suspect before the bar of justice, and give him a fair trial.

Men with field glasses and other paraphernalia of the naturalist went all over the country and proceeded to study birds. For long hours they lay in the fields and meadows, and watched the birds come and go. They watched what they liked best to eat, whether it was marketable grain, or the weed-seed that would prove injurious to the field next season if allowed to grow; whether it was some helpful insect or small animal, or some one that each year was able to destroy whole crops. They killed many birds and sent the crops back to the head laboratory in Washington, where over 75,000 have been examined, and the contents thoroughly analyzed. A great balance sheet is kept for each bird, and when the contents of his crop have been analyzed and entered under various heads the sheet is "footed up" and shows in carefully printed figures whether he is a good and helpful citizen, or one whose existence had best end.

If there be anything a farmer hates it is an owl or a hawk. Occasionally he has seen chickens and small barnyard fowls carried away in their cruel claws, and he figures out that sooner or later such depredations will drive him into bankruptcy. Yet if a certain farmer has had a good supply of owls and hawks a few years ago he could have saved his \$125,000 orchard which was destroyed by field mice, these being the choicest morsels on which they feed. The government summoned these offenders before the bar of justice, and collected evidence for and against them. It was found that as long as the animals and insects which are enemies of man can be secured, that the hawk and the owl feed on these by preference, that barnyard depredations come only when the wild supply is inadequate, which is rare, and that the hawk and the owl are complementary to each other, the one hunting by day, the other by night.

The court divided these offenders into four classes: the wholly beneficial; the chiefly beneficial; the ones in which the beneficial and harmful qualities about balanced; and the harmful species. To the astonishment of the farmer the preponderance of evidence is in favor of the owl and the hawk, instead of against them, and in the wholly beneficial class are the ones he has been at war against for generations—the rough-legged hawk, the squirrel hawk, and the four kites that are indigenous to this country. All the owls are found to be in the chiefly beneficial class except the horned owl, and a few good points are equally balanced by his bad ones. The majority of eagles are in the same class with the horned owl, while six members of the hawk family are condemned, the Cooper hawk being second only to the English sparrow in point of destructiveness.

"That noisy drab and freebooter, the blue-jay, was summoned for trial. The great naturalist, Audubon himself, had given this loquacious coxcomb a bad

name, and general sentiment had always been against him. In the South the negroes will tell you that he has always been in league with the devil, and that the reason you can never find one on Friday is because that is the day on which each Jay-bird goes down to the netherworld to take his master's tribute of a grain of sand. Although sentiment and superstition were both against him, the government has cleared him, and has given him a fairly clean bill of health. It was found that the insects he ate were the destructive kind, that he ate wild nuts in preference to grain, and that his few vices are heavily overbalanced by his virtues."

The sparrow family was then hailed into court. The immigrant English sparrow was condemned. While he is the best means of destroying the dandelion—a real importation—he destroyed more grain than he saves. It was also proved against him that he drives away other birds that are more desirable than himself. His nine American cousins were acquitted and complimented. The amount of weed-seed they destroyed annually saves millions of dollars to the country. Rag-weed, pig-weed, bind-weed, crab-grass, panic-grass, and pig-weed, all furnish seeds that are choice morsels to these busy little fellows, and so strong is the action of their stomachs that an unbroken rag-weed seed is rarely found. From ten to 20 per cent of their food is insects, and made up of pests. They are an excellent army for checking locusts, but do not take kindly to hairy caterpillars and tobacco worms.

Dr. F. E. L. Beal, assistant ornithologist of the Biological Survey, figuring on a most conservative basis, estimates that the tree-sparrows in Iowa destroy 1,750,000 tons of weed-seed a year. This only allows a fourth of an ounce of seed only to each sparrow. Estimating from this basis on a general field crop of \$2,000,000,000 the sparrows can be counted on saving the nation \$20,000,000 a year.

The little country boy planting corn has a way of dropping several grains in each hill, singing as he does it: "One for the black-bird, one for the crow; two for the cut worms, and one to grow." This was considered of sufficient weight to be a warrant for the arrest of the crow and the blackbird. To the world in general the crow has ever been known as a thief and coward. He was accused of eating up corn, of eating fruit and eggs, and of playing marauder on the homes of other birds. All these were proved against him, but evidence was also introduced to show that he ate cut-worms who destroyed more corn than he did, that he made many meals off grasshoppers alone, and that wild fruits were as good to him as fruits in his opinion. So the spirit of justice declares the crow a more helpful than harmful fellow. The red-winged blackbird, too, came out with a fairly good record, though he had been found guilty of rice-eating in some sections. His brother, the bobolink, or rice-bird, did not get off so easily, for that sweet-voiced rogue was caught redhanded with a quantity of rice hidden in his person, and it was proved that the rice-growers lose \$2,000,000 a year on his account.

The buzzard and the sea-gull have always enjoyed a certain immunity from death at the hands of the men and boys of the country. The amount of scavenger duty they do is enormous, and there is a tacit understanding the country over that they should be unmolested. Georgia has earned for herself the rather inelegant name of "the Buzzard State," because of a law on her statute books protecting buzzards. On the coast, and especially in the Golden Gate of California, the gulls are an invaluable aid to the health departments, removing, as they do, all refuse and all dead fish.

When the boll-weevil crossed the line from Mexico and came up into Texas to feed on the cotton there, the United States government immediately appealed to the bird-kingdom for aid. It did not build altars to the birds, as the Syrians used to, nor hail them as "lords of the air," as did the Greeks, or foretell the fate of the crops by the way in which they flew. It simply offered them boll-weevils to eat, and wondered how many they would like a day. The Carolina wren, the tomtit, the titlark, the phoebe, the Florida and Western meadow larks, the red-wing blackbird, the savanna and white-throated sparrows, the killdeer, the